Merie Tales of the mad men of Gotam.

Gathered to gether by A. B. of Phisike Doc-tour.

¶ Here beginneth certain merie tales of the mad men of Gotam.

¶ The first tale.

THeare was two men of Gotam, & the one was goyng to the market to Nottyngham to buye sheepe and the other dyd come from the Market, and bothe met together vppon Nottingham brydge. Well met sayd the one to the other. Whether be you going (sayde hee that came from Nottyngeham, to hym that wente to Nottingeham.) Marye sayde he that wente to Nottyngham, I goe to the market to buye sheepe.

Buye theepe sayde the other, and whyche waye wylte thou bryngе them. Marye sayde the other, I wyll bryngе them ouer thys bridge. By Robyn hoode sayd he that cam from Nottingham, but thou shalte not. By Mayde Maryon sayde he that wente to the market but I wyll. Thou shalte not sayde the other. I wyll sayde the other. Ter here, sayd the one. Shoots theare, sayde the other. They beat theyr staues agaynste the grounde, one agaynste the other, as theare had bene a hundred theepe betwixt them. Holde in theare sayde the one. Beware of leappyng ouer the bridge of my theepe sayd the other, I care not sayd the other, they shal not come thys waye by the malle. By the malle sayde the other, but they

shall

shall. Then sayde the other, and thou make muche to doe, I wyll put my fynger in thy mouthe. I truste thou wilte, saide the other. And as they weare at this contencyon, another man of Gotam dyd come from the market wyth a sacke of meale vppon an horse. And seyng & hearing his neyghboures at stryfe, for sheepe, and none betwixt them said a lookes will you neuer learne wyt. Helpe me saide hee that had the meale, and laye my sacke vppon my shulder, they dyd so. And he went to the one side of the bridge, and vnlosed the mouth of the sacke, and did shake oute all his meale into the ryuer, now neyghbour sayde this man, howe much meale is theare in my sacke nowe, marye theare is none at all sayde then,

Now by my faythe sayd he euen as much he witte is in youre twoo heades, to stryue for that thyng which ye haue not.
Which was the wisest of al these thyee personys? Judge you.

¶ The ii. tale.

There was a man of Gotam dyd ryde to thee market wyth twoo bascheles of wheate, and because hys horse shoulde not beare heauye, hee caryed hys corne vppon hys owne necke, and dyd ryde vppon hys horse, because hys horse shoulde not cary no heauy burthen.

¶ The iii. tale.

On a time the me of Gotam, wolde

wold haue pynned the Cockow, that she should sing all the yeare and in the myddest of the towne they dyd make a hedge (round in compas,) and they had got a Cockow, and put her in it and sayde, synge here all the yeare, and thou shalte lacke neyther meate nor drincke. The Cockow as soone as shee was set wyth in the hedge, flew her waye. A vengeaunce on her sayde they, we made not our hedge high ynough.

¶ The iiii. tale.

There was a man of Gotam the which went to the iugge set to Nottingham to sell cheese. And as hee was goynge downe the hyll to Nottingham hyrde, one of hys cheses dyd fall out of

hys poake, and did runne downe the hyl. I dowlong said the felow, can you runne to the market alone I will sende the one after the other of you. He layde downe hys poake, and tooke the cheeses, and dyd trundle them downe the hyll one after another: and some ran into one bushe, and some into another. And at the laste he sayde I charge you all meete me in the market place. When the fellowe dyd come into the market place to meete hys cheeses, hee dyd tarie tyll the market was almoste done. Then he went about, and dyd inquyre of hys neighboures, and other men if they did see his cheeses come to the market. Who shoulde bringe them? sayd one of the market men. Marye them selues sayd the fellow, they knewe

the

the way well ynoughe. He taryed still tyll it was nyght. At nyghte he sayd a vengeaunce on them al. I dyd feare to see that my cheeses dyd runne so faste, that they runne beyonde the market: I am sure that they be almoste now at yorke. He hyred a horse to ryde after to yorke to see the hys cheeses where they weare not. But to hys daye, no man coulde tell hym of hys cheeses.

¶ The v. tale.

THeare was a man of Gotam and he did buy at Nottyngeham a Trefete (or a Brandyron.) And as he was going home, his shoulder dyd ake:

And hee dyd set downe hys Tre-
fete, and see that it had thre feete
sayde, a horsen, haste thou three
feete, and I but two, thou shalte
beare me home if thou wilte, and
dyd syt downe on the trefete and
sayd, beare me as long as I haue
borne the, for if thou do not, thou
shalt stand still for mee. The man
of Gotam dyd see that hys Tre-
fete wolde not goe further, stand
still sayd he in the Wares name,
and folowe mee if thou wylte, I
wyll teil thee the ryghte waye to
my house. Whã he did com home
to his house his wife sayd, where
is my Brandiron or trefete. The
man sayde he hath three legges,
and I haue but two legges, and
I dyd teach hym the way to my
house, let hym come home if hee
wyll. Wheare lefte ye the Trefete

sayd

sayde the wyfe. At Gotam hyll, sayde the man. The wife did runne and fetch home his treasure, or else she had lost it.

¶ The vi tale.

THeare dwelt a smith in Gotam, the wyche had a Waspes nest in the straw in the ende of his Forge. Theare dyd come one of hys neyghboures to haue hys horse shooed, and the waspes weare so busye that the fellow was stong, with a waspe. He beyng angrye sayde, art thou worthy to keepe a Forge, to haue men stunge here wythe Waspes? O neyghboure sayde the smythe, be content. I wyll put them from theyr nestes bye and bye. He tooke a Coulter and heated it in hys

Forge

forge glowyng hote, and thrust it into the strawe in the ende of hys forge. And so he dyd set hys forge a fyre, and dyd burne it hype. Than sayde the Smythe. I tolde thee that I wouide fyre them furth of theyr nestes.

The vii. tale.

When that good frydaye was come, the men of Gotam dyd caste theyr heads together what they should doe with theyr whyte heatyng, and theyr red heatyng, and their spyrottes, and salt fysshe. One consulted with the other, and agreed that all such fysh should be cast into their pōd or poole (the whiche was in the myddle of theyr towne,) that it myght increase against

againste the nexte yeare. Euery man that had any fishe lefte, dyd cast it into the poole, the one sayd I haue thus manye whyte hearinges, the other sayde, I haue thus many sprotes, another sayde I haue thus many red hearings, the other said I haue thus much salte fysshe. Let all go together in to the poole or pond, and we shall fare like Lordes next lent. At the beginninge of the next lent, folowinge, the men dyd drawe theyr ponde to haue theyr fysshe: & there was nothing but a great Ele.

(I sayde they all) a mychefe on this Ele, sez he hath eate vp all our fysshe. What shal we do wyth hym sayde the one to the other. Kill hym said another. Chop him all to peces said another. Nay not so said other, let vs drowne him: be it sayd all. They

They wente to another poole or pond by, and dyd caſt in the Eele into the water. Lye theare ſayde they and dyſt for thy liſe, for no helpe thou ſhalte haue of vs. And theare they lefte the Eele to bee drowned.

The viii. tale.

ON a time the men of Gotam had forgotten to paye theyr rent to their Lord. The one ſayd to the other, to morow is our pay day, and what reamedy ſhall we fynde to ſende our money to oure Lorde? The one ſayde thys daye I haue taken a quicke Hare, and he ſhall carye it, for he is lyght of foote. Be it ſayde all, he ſhal haue a letter, and a purſe to put in our money and wee wyll tell hym the

waye. When the Letters weare wryt, and the money put into a purſſe, they dyd tye them aboute the Hares necke ſayinge, fyrſſe thou muſt go to Lowghburrow, and the to Leyceter, and at newwarke theare is our Lorde, and commende vs to him, and theare is hys dutye. The hare as ſoone as hee was out of theyr handes, he did run a clene contrary waye. Some cryed out to him ſayinge thou muſt goe to Lowghburrow fyrſſe. Some ſayde lett the Hare alone, he can tel a nearer way the the beſt of vs all: let him go.

The ix. tale.

ON a tyme theare was one of Gotam mowynge in the meades, and found a great graſſ-

hopper

hopper. He dyd caſte downe hys ſythe and dyd runne home to his neighbours and ſayde that there was a Deuill in the ſyelde that hopped in the graſſe. Then there was euerye man readye wythe clubbes and ſtaues, wythe, Halbardes, and other weapons, to go to kill the Graſhopper. When they did come to the place where that the Graſhopper ſhoulde bee, ſayde the one to the other, lette euerye man croſſe hym ſelfe from this Deuill, for we wyll not meddle wyth hym. And ſo they returned home againe and ſayde, wee weare well bleſſe thys daye that we went no further. A cowardes ſayd he that had the ſythe in the mead, helpe me to fetch my ſithe. No ſaide they, it is good to ſleape in a whole ſkynne: better it is to

leeſe

leese thy sithe, then to may be all

Then take

ON a certaine time there were twelue of Gotam did goe a fishyng. Some did wade in the water, and some stoode a dry lande. And when that they went homewarde, the one sayde to the other, we haue ventured farre to day in wadyng. I pray god that none of vs (that dyd come from home) bee drowned. Warne eache the one to the other, let vs see that, for there dyd twelue of vs come out. And they tolde themselues, and eyther man dyd tell xi. men, and the twelfe man dyd neuer tell for himselfe. Alas sayde the one to the other there is one of vs drowned.

They went backe to the brooke where that they had ben fishing and sought vp and down for him that was drowned, & dyd make great lamentation. A Courtyer dyd come ridying by and dyd aske what that they dyd leese. And why they weare so sorye. O sayd they, this day one went to fysche this brooke and there dyd come but twelue of vs, and one is drowned. Why sayd the Courtier tell how many be ye. And the one told. xi. and he dyd not tell himselfe. Well sayd the Courtier what will you geue me & I will fynd out twelue men? Sir sayde they, all the money that we haue. Well mee the rather, sayde the courtier. And he began with the first, and did geue him a recreuer betwene iauet the shoulders, that

 he

he groned, and sayd there is one to be served all that they groned on the matter when he dyd come to the lake he payde him a good sayinge, here is the tweste man. Gods blessing on your hart sayd all the companie, that you have found out our neighbour.

¶ The xi. tale.

THere was a man of Gotam did ride by ỹ way & did find a cheese in the hye way, & he pulde out his sword, & pozyd & pricked with the poynte of his sword to take up the cheese. Theare did come another mā by & did a leyght & take up the chese & rid his way. The man of gotam did ride back to Nottingham to buye a longare sword to take up the cheese. And whē he had bought his sword he sturned back. B.ii. And

And when he did come to ꝑ place where the cheese dyd lye he pulled out his swerde and pyerced at the grounde saynge, a murryon take it, if I had had thys swerde I had had the cheese.

¶ The. xii. tale.

There was a man of Gotam ꝙ wee dyd not loue his wyfe: ꝙ she hauinge a sayre beare, his husbande said diuers times ꝑ he would cut it of, ꝙ he durste not doe it when she was waking, but when she was a sleape. So on a nyght he toke vp a paire of sheres and layde them vnder hys beads head, The whyche the wyfe perceyued. And then shee dyd call to her one of her maydes and sayde, go to bead to my husband, for wee

is

ig wynded to cut of my beare to
wyght, let hym cut of thy heare, &
I wyll giue thee as good a wyfe
as euer thou dydſt weare. The
mayde dyd ſo, & layded her ſelfe
a ſleepe the whiche the man per-
ceyuyng cut of the maydes heare
and dyd wrap it about the ſheres
and layde it vnder hys beadles
head, and fell a ſleape. The wyfe
made her mayde to aryſe, & tooke
the heare and the ſheres, & went
into the hall & burnte the heare.
This man had a houſe the whych
hee dyd loue aboue all thynges.
The wyfe went into the ſtable, &
cut of the houſe tayle, & dyd wrap
the ſheres in the houſe tayle, and
layd it vnder hir husbads beade.
In the morninge whe dyd aryſe be
time, & did ſit by the fire kepining
hir head. At laſt the mā did come

to the fire, & seynge his wife beyn
ning yll bed inattended on it the
maide seing her maister standyng
in a browne studie saide, what a
deuil aileth the wozle in the stable
for he bleedeth sore, the good man
ran into the stable, & sout de that
his wozle tale was cut of hee went
to his beads heade & did finde the
there wrapt in hys wozle tale, &
did com to his wife saying, I pry
the merci for I had thought that
I had cut of thy heade to night, &
I haue cut of my wozle tayle. ye
sayd the selfe do selfe haue, many
a man tu meeth to vp another ma
a diuerse tarne, and turneth the
cat hymes to his owne selfe.

¶ The xiij tale.

THere was a man in Gotam
that layde a wager wyth
hys wyfe that shee should
not

not make him beleeue. No said she but I can. Speke not said he, do what thou canste. On a tyme she bad a the spyggots & tallets in ye house, and shee went into her buttrie and set a barrell a broche, & cryed to her husband and sayde, I prye you bringe me hether a spyggot and a tallet, or elle al the ale will runne out. The good man sought vp and downe and could fynde none. Come hether sayde she than, and holde your fynger in the tap hole. She pulles out her finger, and the good man put in bys. She then called to her a Taylor the whych did dwell at the nexte doore, with whom shee made a blinde bargayne. And wythin a while shee did come to her husbande, and bad him bryng a spiggot & a tallet with his tayle.

B.iiii. but

put out your finger out of the cay-
dle gentle. Certes (sayd he) you have
lost your bargayn. I doe not wor-
ry that for my trouble (said the good
man.) I take no lacke bargayne
then saybe the with me.

¶ The xiiii. tale.

There was a man of Gotam
that had take a Bustard, &
to the eating of it yee did bid .viii.
or .x. gentlemens seruants. The
wyfe had sodden an olde broode
goose: and the and two of hir gos-
lyngs had eaten vpp the Bustarde.
The olde goose was layde to the
fyre for the gentlemens seruants.
When that they were come, and
the old goose set before the, what
is this sayd one of the men? The
goodman said, a good fat bustard.

Wiues sayd they: it is an olde
goose: and thou arte a knaue to
mocke vs. And in a great anger
they departed out of the house &
went home. The fellow was sory
that the gentlemans seruaunts
were angry, and dyd take a bag
and dyd put in the Bustardes fe-
thers, and thought to go to them
and shew them the fethers of the
Bustarde, and so to please them.
The wife prayed the husband (or
he went) to fetche in a blocke of
the fyre: and the mean space
she dyd put out all the Bustardes
fethers, and dyd put in the goose
fethers. The man takynge the
poore bag, went to the gen-
tlemans seruaunts and sayde, I
pray you be not angry with me
for you shall see here that I had a
husband, for here be the fethers

he opened his bag, and did shake out the goose fethers, The gentlemens seruants seing the goose fethers sayde, why knaue couldest thou not be contented to mocke vs at home at thine owne house, but art come to mock vs here, the one tooke a waster, & dyd geue hym a dosen stripes saying, take this for a reward, & mock vs no more.

¶ The xij. tale.

THeare was a ponge man of Gotam the which should go a woing to a faire maid, but his mother did warne hym saying, whē thou dost loke vpon her, geue a sheepes eye and saye, how do ye, sweete pygges nyse. The maide was wont to ꝑ butchers a bought .iij. or .iiij. sheepes eyes, & when they lusty woer did sit at diner he would

loke

loke vpon his faire wench, he would caste in her face a sheepes eye saying, how do you my piggesnye, how do I (said the wench) swines face, why doest thou caste the sheepes eye vpon me. O sweete piggesnye, sayd he, haue at thee another: I defye thee swynes face sayde the wenche. The fellow beinge abusshed sayd, what sweete pygge be content, for and if thou do liue vntill the next yeare, thou wilt be a fowle sowe. Walk knaue (quoth she) for if thou liue vntill the next yeare, thou wilt be a starke lunge and a lubber, and a foole. Heere a man may see, for a mans good will [illegible]

[illegible]

The

The father dyd bydde the goſſops, the whiche were chyldren of viii. or nine yeares of age. The eldeſt childes name that ſhould be godfather was named Gylbert. The ſecond chyld was named Hüfry. And the godmothers name was Chriſtabell. The frends of them dyd warne the them ſayinge, that dyuers tymes they muſt ſay after the prieſte. When all were come to the church doze, the prieſt ſaid, be you agreed of the name, be you ſaid Gylbert agreed of the name. Be you ſayde Hüfry agreed of the name. Be you ſaid Chriſtabell agreed of the name, the prieſt ſayd wherefore hee you come hether. Gylbert ſayde, wherefore be you come hether. Humfry ſaid wherefore hee you come hether. Chriſtabell ſayde wherefore be you come

hether. The prieſt being amaſed coulde not tell what to ſaye, but whiſteled & ſaide whewe, Gylbert whiſteled and ſaid whewe. Humfry whiſtled and ſaid whewe, & ſo did Chriſtabell. The prieſt being angry ſaid, go home fooles go home Go home fooles go home ſaid gilbert, go home fooles go home ſaid Humfry, go home fooles go home ſaid Chriſtabell. The prieſt then prouided for Godfathers & Godmothers. Here a man maye ſee that chyldren can do nothing wtout good inſtructions. And they be not wiſe yͤ wil regard chyldrẽs wordes.

¶ The xvii. tale.

There was a man of Gotam the whych ſhuld be maried, & when the day of maryage was appoyn-

appoynted, & the time came that they shoulde be maried together, the priest sayd say after me. The man said say after me. The priest said, say not after me such wordes but say after me as I will tel thee. The fellow said, say not after me such wordes, but saye after me as I will tell thee. The priest sayde, thou dost playe the foole and the knaue, to mock with this holy sacrament of matrymony. The fellow said, thou dost play the foole and the knaue to mock with this holie sacrament of matrymonye. The priest could not tell what to say, but said what shal I do with this foole. The felow said, what shal I doe with this foole. Farewell sayde the priest, I wyll not marrie thee. Farewell sayde the fellow, I wyll not marrye thee.

The

The priste departed: howbee it the fellow (by other men) was instructed how to doe: after that hee was married. And I herd say such a foolish pranke was played at Kingston of late dayes.

The viii. tale.

There was a Scottish man the whiche dyd dwell at Gotam, and hee had taken an house a lytle from London, and of it he would make an Inne, and to his Signe hee would haue a Boyes head. And he went to London to haue a Boyes head made. He dyd come to a Carner (or a Joyner) saying in his mother tonge, Ifaye speke, lens thou make me a Bare heare, ye said the Carner.

Then

Than sayd the Scotyshman, wilt me a bare head anenst yowle, an thowse bus haue pt pence for thy hyre. I wyll doe it sayde the Carter. On S. Andrewes daye before Chrystmas (the which is named yowle in Scotland, & in England in the north.) the scottish mã did cause his Sondẽ for his Boyes heade to set at a doze for a signe. I say syrs sayd the Scottish man, hathe thou made me a Bare head. yea sayd the Carter. Then it owle a good fellow. The Carter went and did bryng a mang head of wod that was bare and sayd, lo here is youre bare head. I say sayde the Scotyshman, the mokyl deuill, is this a bare head. ye sayd the carter. I say sayd the Scottishman, I will haue a bare head, syr an head as dery tolloo

a Sew

A Sem that hath Greces. Syr
ſaid the carter, I can not tel what
is a Sem, nor what is a Grece,
wher here is, nenſt thou not a ſow
that will grece & grone, & her gre-
ces will run after her & cry a wene
a wene. O ſaid the Carter, it is a
pigge. yes ſaid the ſkotiſh man let
me haue his fathers head made
in timber, & meke me a bird & ſet
it on his thaips, and cauſe her to
ſing whip whit, whip whit. The
carter ſayde, I can not cauſe her
to ſinge whip whit. Whe how ſay
ſayde the ſkotiſh man gar her as
ſhe wouide ſinge whip whit.
Here a man maye ſee that euerye
man doth delight in his owne ſe-
ces, or doth reioice in his fantaſie

¶ The xix. tale.

IN old time whe as theſe afore
ſaid Ie ſes was (as me of that

countrey reporteth) that such fan-
tasticall matters weare done at
Gotam (the which I can not tell
whether.) The wyues weare gathe-
red together in an alehouse. And
the one sayde to the other y they
weare all profitable to their hus-
bandes. Why the waye good gos-
sips sayd the Alewife. The fyrst
sayd, I shall tell you all good gos-
sips: I can neither bake nor brew
nor I can doe no worke, wherefore
I do make euery day holiday
& I go to the alehouse, bicause at
all times I cannot go to y churche,
& in the alehouse I praye to God
to speede well my husband. And
I do thinke my prayer that do him
much more good, then my labour
if I could worke. Then sayde the
second, I am profitable to my hus-
band in saueing of candels in winter

for I do cause my husband and al my house folkes to go to bed by dayligh̄te, & to rise by dayligh̄t. The thyrd wife sayd, I am pro-vytable to my husbande in spend-ing of bread, for I will eate but litle, for to the drinkyng of a gal-lon or two of good ale, I care for no meate. The fourth wife saide, I am loth to spend meat & drinke at home in my owne house, wher-fore I do go to the wine tauerne at Nottingham, & do take some, and such thinges as god shal send me theare. The fifte wyfe sayd a man shall euer haue more compa-nye in another mans house then his owne, (& most cõmonlye in an Ale-house is the best cheare in a towne.) And for sparing of meate & drynke and other necessaryes, I do go to the ale-house. The fift

wife ſaid, my huſband hath wood, and hee and I cow and to ſpare it, I go to other mens houſes to do other mens woorke. The ſeuenth wife ſaid, I doe ſpare my huſbands wood & coles, and doe ſit raſting all the day by other mens fires. The eight ſaid, beefe, mutton, & porke is dere, wherfore I doe ſpare it, & do take pigge, goose, hen, chicken roope and capon, the which be of lower price. The ninth ſaid, I do ſpare my huſbands ſope & lye, for when hee ſhoulde be waſhed once in a weeke, I doe waſh once in a quarter of a yeer. Then ſayd the alewife, and I doe keepe my huſbandes ale (that I do brew,) from ſowring. For wheare as I was wont to drynke vp all, nowe I do leaue neuer a drop.

The

Dunch diuers times in the yeere, ſpecially in Lent. The prieſt ſayd in Dent thou ſhouldeſt make reſtraint from fleſhlines, & abſtaine from drinke. Not ſo ſaid the fellow, for to auoyd waterbrothe, for if the water ſtuffe ye ſayd the prieſte, it muſt ſwim in water. I crye God mercy ſayd the fellow, I thought it ſhould haue ſwom in good ale.

A merri tale.

One after another the men of Gotam did come to ſhrift, & when they were ſhryuē the prieſt ſaid I cannot tell what penaūce to geue you. If I ſhould enioyne you to prayer, there is non of you that can ſay your Pater noſter, & you be now to old to learne. And to enioye you to faſt, it were but folyſhnes, for you doe not eate a good meales meate in a yeare.

Where

Wherfore I do intoyne the to labour wel the weeke, & then maist farewel to diner an the sondaies: and I wil come to diner and se that it be so, and take part. Another man bee dyd entoyne to fare well the monday. And another the twesday. And so one after another, that one or other shoulde fare well once a weeke, that hee myght haue parte of the meate. And as for almes deedes & priest sayd, you be but beggers all, except it be one or two, therfore bestowe the almes on youre owne selues.

FINIS.

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